

MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Tuesday, March 1, 2005 2:35 p.m. Room 307 House Office Building, Lansing

Representative Nitz, Chair, called the Committee to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Representatives Nitz, Ball, Stahl, Proos, Hune, Mayes, Spade, Kathleen Law, Sheltroun. (9/11)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: Representatives Newell, Casperson. (2/11)

The Chair welcomed former visiting Representatives Larry Julian and Mike Green to the meeting.

Representative Stahl made a motion to adopt the minutes of the meeting of February 22, 2005, supported by Representative Ball. No objections being offered, a unanimous ballot was cast to accept the minutes as presented.

Dale Sherwin, State Director, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, spoke to the Committee regarding Fiscal Year 2004 dollars brought back to Michigan. Other topics reviewed included several areas: the Housing Program, the Community Program, and the Business Program. Mr. Sherwin also discussed the Rural Development Loan and Grant Programs available in Michigan. Directors Lee Bambusch, Frank Tuma and Ghulam Sumbal were introduced to the Committee. Questions and discussion followed.

John Bakker, representing Michigan Asparagus, Onion and Peach Associations, explained the USDA program impact on the asparagus industry in Michigan.

Former State Representative Mike Green, representing Rural Partners of Michigan, reviewed the function and activities of Rural Partners and informed members of an upcoming development conference.

Brad Deacon and Vince Matthews, representing the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Agriculture Statistics, reviewed National Agriculture Statistics Services information pertinent to Michigan legislative districts. (This information may be accessed at: www.michigan.gov/mda and www.nass.usda.gov/mi.) Discussion followed.

Representative Ball made a motion to excuse absent members, supported by Representative Law. No objections being offered, absent members were excused.

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There being no additional business before the Committee, Chair Nitz declared the meeting adjourned, the time being 3:42 p.m.

Representative Neal Nitz, Chair

Catherine Petroskey, Committee Clerk
(517) 373-8538